

# THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE  
ASSOCIATION OF ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS

(Section of the Library Association)

VOL. XLI

JULY—AUGUST, 1948

No. 4

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HON. EDITOR : J. F. W. BRYON

Beckenham Public Libraries

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## *Library Assistant*—Distribution

**I**T is regretted that the mailing list for *The Assistant* has not been entirely accurate. At present parcels of the journal are sent to one member of the staff of a Library who has kindly consented to distribute the copies to individual members. To reduce as far as possible the number of parcels it will be appreciated if the following might be observed.

### **Parcels**

In order that this system might operate smoothly regular checking of the mailing list is necessary. It is, therefore, essential for members in each Library System to elect one of their number to act as distributor for *The Assistant* and to forward to the Divisional Secretary his or her name, together with a list (in duplicate) of members whose journals are to be included in the parcel. With the lists should be included two 5" x 3" cards giving the following information :—

- (a) Name of person willing to receive the parcel ;
- (b) Name of deputy willing to receive the parcel ;
- (c) Address of Library to which parcel should be sent ;
- (d) Number of copies required (to coincide with list of members).

This information should be sent to Divisional Secretaries as soon as possible.

### **Members unable to avail themselves of the parcel system**

Members who have formerly had copies of *The Assistant* posted to them direct should similarly notify Divisional Secretaries in cases where it is not possible for them to make use of a parcel distribution in future.

They should send two 5" x 3" cards with the following details :—

- (a) Declaration—I cannot make use of parcel distribution ;
- (b) Name in full ;
- (c) Library address ;
- (d) Private address.

### **Members not attached to Divisions**

Members who are not attached to a Divisional organization should send two

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5" x 3" cards to the Hon. Membership Sec., Mr. Walter F. Broome, F.L.A., Tate Central Library, Brixton Oval, London, S.W.2. The details required are as follows :—

- (a) Name in full ;
- (b) Library address ;
- (c) Private address.

If you wish to receive your "Assistant" regularly and on time, PLEASE ACT NOW  
Members are reminded that the above applies to them only if they have :—

- (a) paid their Library Association subscription ; and
- (b) notified the Secretary of the Library Association that they wish to be a member of the A.A.L. Section.

### Wanted

The Hon. Joint Education Secretaries would be grateful to receive any spare copies of *The Assistant* for September/October, 1947, and March/April, 1948. Members wishing to help should send their copy to them at the Carnegie Library, Herne Hill Road, London, S.E.24.

## Council Notes

FOR the third Council Meeting of the present session on 12th May with the President (E. Cave, Esq.) in the Chair.

The arrangements for the Annual General Meeting were discussed and it was also arranged that a draft motion on the Promotion Examination should be circulated to all Divisions for action through NALGO branches where possible. The Finance and General Purposes Committee submitted details of the proposed procedure for the distribution of *The Library Assistant* and the recording of membership.

It occasionally happens that the Council meet and deliberate for four or five hours on vital but essentially routine matters. This was such a meeting.

E. A. C.

## Library Broadcast

E. SYDNEY

THIS broadcast was an experiment in library publicity to a specified group of persons, and maybe some of the underlying principles would be of interest to my colleagues.

**General :** It was a talk in a series on Local Government in the Woman's Hour on the Light Programme at 2 p.m. It had to be devised within the conditions inherent in the general scope and purpose of the programme.

**Time Limit :** Eight minutes. This limited the range of ideas, and the extent to which they could be developed.

**Audience :** It was necessary to attempt to understand the kind of audience which would be listening ; to see those people in relation to their day's work ; to appreciate their mental and physical states at the time of the broadcast, and to what extent their immediately ensuing employment would give opportunity for continued consideration of any ideas which appealed to them.

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- Approach :** There seemed to be three possible lines of approach :—
1. As the talk was one in a series on Local Government, to explain or expound, as simply as possible, some of the legal, financial, administrative and professional ramifications of library services. At the best such a talk could be a sketch only.
  2. To talk as wittily and pithily as possible on the intellectual, cultural, occupational and recreational satisfactions to be gained from membership and use of the public library.  
I estimated that 2 p.m. in the day of a busy housewife was not the appropriate hour for either of these approaches. And so I chose the third line.
  3. To attempt to interpret library service in terms of human situations ; that is, to select from the circumstances of the probable listeners certain aspects of life and its current, urgent problems, and then to explain how library service could, and does, help in the solution of these difficulties.
- Content :** It was obvious the time of eight minutes limited the number of ideas which could be put forward and developed. I estimated not more than three could be used if they were to be remembered. The selection was, therefore, important, and I chose three common factors in almost every family to-day.
- Presentation :** A broadcast of this type is a "talk." It isn't literary prose, no matter how well read. It is hardly prose ; it's conversation. No long sentences. It fails if it sounds as if it were being read. It's got to be talk, good talk, with all the elisions, emphases, pauses, hesitations, variations in speed, and tightening and slackening of emotional tensions. It isn't easy, in fact, it is extremely hard to write "talk," especially when it isn't dialogue.
- Voice :** If the B.B.C. advise that your voice is unsuitable, believe them, and write scripts for others to broadcast. Amplifiers have a bad habit of exaggerating both the squeaks and the growls, and it really doesn't matter how good your script is, if your voice prevents it from gaining acceptance. Few of us have alternative voices at our command like actors and actresses, and we have to be content with our natural and normal equipment. What is terrifying about the unsupported voice through the microphone—unsupported, so far as the listener is concerned, by facial expression, gestures, body movement and so forth, which build up a speaker's effect on a visual audience—is its uncanny revelation of personality.

I suspect the only really interesting idea in all the foregoing is in the third line of approach, and one which I would like to see given much consideration by my colleagues. It has uses in other forms of service publicity, as well as broadcasting ; for the bold and bald statement that books and libraries are, like Guinness, good for you, may be true, but most people want to be told how and why, in terms and situations understandable from their own experience.

Complaints have been made that the B.B.C. does not invite librarians sufficiently often to talk on library service. I have no idea what truth there is in this, but I am confident the Corporation will give careful consideration to any scripts which make a serious, not necessarily solemn, attempt to present aspects of library service in an

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attractive, interesting and persuasive fashion. It is more than probable the neglect, if such it be, is not wholly on the side of the Corporation, and there is some truth in a saying in the Lancashire of my youth—"Those who don't ask, don't want."

Local Government : "The Public Library," by Edward Sydney.

Transmission : Wednesday, 21st January, 1948. 2.00.3.00 p.m. Light Programme, London.

OFTEN amongst my friends and in my family I hear the enquiry "I wish I knew," or "Where can I find out?" Oh, this or that! Some little fact of everyday need, sometimes urgent, but always handicapping and irritating by its absence. My usual suggestion is "Go to, write to, or phone the public library." "The library?" "Well, why not? If they don't know the answer they will know someone who does." "Won't they think it trivial? It hasn't anything to do with literature, or art, or study." "No, but try them. Ask for a senior librarian; or go to your reference Library, if you have one; or, if you have time write to the librarian." The usual reaction is "Well, it's an idea," sometimes tinged with excusable doubt, because so few people look on their public library as a centre of information. So let me tell you a true story.

In the early months of 1940, my reference librarian and I were discussing how we could turn the reference library on to war service. Ours was an evacuated East London borough. Those citizens who remained were attempting to fit themselves into strange living conditions which were bringing bewildering and fearful problems. They certainly brought an endless and bemusing stream of official regulations, exhortations, suggestions, and instructions. All kinds of agencies, official and voluntary, were being organized to help us in one way or another. It was all very perplexing, and how were we to know, when the time came, which was the one to deal with our particular difficulty? And, so we argued, ought there not to be now, and at all times, in this town, one recognized place to which all of us could go immediately, state our trouble and ask for information? And then, could the library be the place, and were we equipped to be it? Well, we had 10,000 specially selected reference books; we had many years' experience in using the information they contained; and we were used to dealing with all kinds of people every day. We knew the municipal services and their officers; we knew something of Central Government departments, the official channels, the short cuts and perhaps a back door or two. Perhaps we could fill the bill. We could try.

So in May, 1940, the reference library became the local information centre—and still is. Since then we have dealt with 56,000 enquiries of all kinds. Many we answered immediately, and many we sent to the proper quarter for the answer. How much time, temper, needless worry and shoe leather were saved cannot be calculated. You know, it was then, and still is the womenfolk who most frequently have the job of chasing the information necessary to straighten out some family problem, whilst the men are out at work. So I suggest to you as I do to my friends, "Don't go running all over the place, go at once to the library, and ask there." It's an idea!

And here's another. In November, 1946, the librarian of Bethnal Green held a competition amongst the children using the library to find out what they were reading, and their ideas on the service generally. The startling, shocking fact which emerged was that a whole generation of children had been cut off, by the war and its consequences, from reading the great children's classics. Books like *Tom Sawyer*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Water Babies*, Andersen's *Fairy Stories*, which were top favourites in a similar competition just before 1939, now receive barely a mention. Not because they have

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lost their appeal, but because Bethnal Green children, and many thousands of others, have been unable to get them in their libraries and elsewhere. To grow up without having known Tom Sawyer, and Alice, and Christopher Robin, and others, is to have missed some of the most wonderful experiences of childhood. Are your children being denied these unforgettable and unforgotten friends? I hope not.

Has your library been allotted sufficient funds to buy them in plenty? I hope so! Some libraries have charming children's rooms, with lectures, films, play-readings, and story-hours all for children, with trained children's librarians in command. *All* Libraries ought to have them. For *your* children's sake, and your neighbour's, find out what is going on in your town. Bethnal Green was lucky, for Canada generously gave them 1,500 fine editions of children's classics, to make up for some of the loss, but we shall have to make up our own losses, and our children can't wait; or can they?

And, whilst I am on families. In my own family we have four young folks studying for university degrees or professional examinations, and we know, as well as most, the constant search of bookshops for new or secondhand text-books, and supplementary reading matter; the exchanges with co-students; the searching of library catalogues and shelves; the reserving of books at the library and the anxious awaiting our turn, and then when it comes along, the fond hope the librarian will not be too irate if we keep a book rather longer than is fair to other students. But, being a librarian's family, we also know the various facilities provided for students, such as extra tickets, long loan periods, the books in the library on our subjects, the advice obtainable from the staff about alternative books, and the secondhand booksellers' catalogues which the librarian receives regularly. You see, *we* know these things, but do you and your folks? And if not, why not?

Remember this, if you forget everything else I have just said. Remember, the whole of the library services of Great Britain and Northern Ireland banded themselves together, years ago, to lend books to one another; and every day, today, hundreds of books, 700 of them, are travelling across the length and breadth of these islands to the aid of students everywhere. It doesn't matter where you are, if you really need a particular book, you can, by asking your village librarian, your travelling book van, the county library in the County Offices, your branch or town central library, set in motion machinery which will, in due course, bring that book to your hand, if it's obtainable. What this service has meant to students in this country since the end of the war is incalculable! It is the only service of its kind in the world, and we librarians are very proud of it. Please see that your folks know all about it.

## Students' Problems

A. J. WALFORD

**T**HERE is no doubt that the student's plan of campaign would be made much easier if some indication were given of the examiners' scale of values. I have therefore given below the gist of the Examiners' Reports for December, 1947, adding only a few remarks of my own. Comments have been restricted to the Entrance and Registration Examinations for November—December.

ENTRANCE. (Passes 67%.)

Efforts in general were considered to be an improvement upon previous entries, "possibly because for many the December examinations are used for second efforts."

*Chief faults in presentation:* poor word sense; poor punctuation; some execrable handwriting.

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*Chief misconceptions* : (1). Too few seem to have seen a printed catalogue or can describe a sheaf catalogue accurately. Thus, a "slip" in a sheaf catalogue is not itself a "sheaf." (2). In Q. 3 of Paper 2, the main rule "class by subject and then by form, etc." was only half understood. (3). Confusion in Q. 6 of Paper 2 between the subject index (to the classified catalogue) and the subject catalogue.

Q. 5 of Paper 4 may be cited as an example of "careless reading and lack of thought." It ran : "What sources of information, in addition to books, should a reference library contain?" The limiting clause, "in addition to books," was often ignored. Students should make a point of underlining operative words in questions so that they shall not be overlooked ; the whole answer may depend on such words.

### REGISTRATION.

#### (i) *Classification.* (Passes : 32%)

The lowest percentage of passes of all the results. "Immaturity is written all over the papers."

*Chief faults of presentation* : spelling mistakes ; grammar and construction ; "howlers" ; involved and confused thought, and the wasting of time in endless speculation instead of getting down to the question ; the taking of refuge in endless padding in cases of pure ignorance. "Candidates appear to plunge straight into their answers, and rely upon luck to bring them out at the end."

*Chief misconceptions* : (1). Poor definitions (e.g., "Dichotomy" ; "Hierarchy"). (2). Inability to differentiate between the detailed contents of Dewey's General Works class and that of others. (3). Confused ideas regarding the meaning of "decimal order," which is neither arithmetical nor numerical order. (4). The now familiar confusion between "*pukka* Dewey" and Dewey as used locally in shelf arrangement.

Q. 5 was a "classic example of the misread question." To draw up a brief introduction to Dewey for the general reader is *not* to dilate upon the layman's difficulties or to tell the examiners "how *they* should deal with the question," but simply to introduce Dewey in words of one syllable. Q. 6 was particularly badly answered. "Difficulties and requirements of Special Libraries seem to be neither appreciated nor taught." Detail is only one of the special classifier's needs ; specialization, the collocation of aspects of subjects which are scattered in Dewey by view-point, detailed terminology, the use of "internal" sub-divisions—these are also important.

#### (ii) *Cataloguing.* (Passes : 43.5%)

"The basic essentials for reliable cataloguing : sufficient general "background" knowledge, clarity of expression, careful *accuracy*, and neatness of working were conspicuously absent from the scripts returned by the majority of candidates."

*Chief faults of presentation* (this becomes criminal neglect in the case of practical cataloguing) : spelling ; punctuation (especially the omission of "use of the semi-colon to separate title proper from a phrase relating to editor, translator, etc. (see A.A. Code Rule 173)"; use of ampersand ; lack of examples ("neglect of this caused the loss of many easy marks").

*Chief misconceptions* : (1). Confusions between "references," "cross-references," "see references," and "see also references." (2). Ignorance regarding such terms as "vignette," "epigraph," "cancel." (3). Pre-occupation with the "sub-standard cataloguing" in one's own library, as if no other existed.

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- (4). Insufficient memorizing of the A.A. Code Rules (e.g., confusion of rules 35-37 with rule 33).

The examiners condemn the practice of gambling on certain questions being asked, and make the important point that the object of the examiners is "to discover rather what is known than what is not." In the case of Q. 10 ("Assign subject headings . . .") the standard was noticeably below that of recent examinations. "Candidates were either ignorant of the subject indicated by the titles or, knowing them, were unable to assign to them appropriate catalogue headings (not to speak of *relevant* references)." The latter italics are mine.

(iii) *Bibliography*. (Group B Passes : 46.5%)

"On the whole the results continue to show an improvement, though slovenly writing and bad English are still far too prevalent." Several questions asked for a systematic marshalling of facts or some process of elimination (e.g., Q. 4), but this was seldom given.

*Chief misconceptions* : (1). The meaning of "specification" in QQ. 1 and 3. (2). Hurried reading of questions, and the overlooking of limiting clauses and implicit stipulations. Thus Q. 7 states : "Describe any photo-mechanical processes of book illustration which you consider specially suitable for use in a well-printed book." This clearly calls for reasons for one's choices. Note also "processes," not "process." Again Q. 5 asks : "What are the main causes of deterioration of paper in books?" To attribute lack of strength to shortness of fibre is one thing ; to explain why this is a cause of weakness is quite another.

(iv) *Assistance to Readers*.

"In general the standard of writing and spelling was higher than in previous examinations ; the papers received were, in the main, legible and well set out . . ."

*Chief misconceptions* : (1). Ignorance of the standard bibliographies (in answer to Q. 4, the British Museum (author) catalogue was cited *ad nauseam* ; there are other bibliographies far more handy and accessible, such as the *English catalogue*.) (2). Misreading of questions (Q. 7, on equipping oneself to advise students on their reading, was not really concerned with the specific job of reader's adviser). (3). Much confusion in the definition of "primary" and "secondary" bibliography and in the examples cited. (Q. 10.)

Q. 1 (co-operative booklists) was attempted by a number of students who should not have done so, since they knew no examples. "The County Library section lists, and the new Library Association series were mentioned, but not 'Recommended books' or the American lists."

Q. 3 runs : "You are asked for information on (a) Japanese miniature gardens, (b) Theosophy, (c) The cuckoo, (d) Jet propulsion. Show how you would find information on *any two* of these subjects, indicating books to be consulted." This type of question worries many students and is often avoided ; it must be treated systematically, "proceeding from catalogue to shelves, then on to encyclopædic works."

(v) *Library Organization and Administration*. (Group C Passes : 36%)

Chief faults seem to have been factual ones : a lack, for example, of detailed knowledge of the subject (e.g., Q. 2, on the Inter-allied Book Centre ; Q.4, on the Dickman system) ; ignorance of the dimensions of shelves or of rooms.

*Some misconceptions* : (1). Confusion between "staff manual" and "staff time book" in Q. 1. (2). Ignorance of what constitutes an analytical issue record



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(Q. 2), or "extra-mural work" (Q. 6). (3). Omission of the Arts Council, National Book League and W.E.A. as cultural activities, in Q. 7.

Q. 9 definitely states: "List the advantages and disadvantages. . ." Yet a number of candidates persisted in writing badly-arranged essays, making no attempt at tabulation. Q. 10 (on the Sheffield technical periodicals' co-operative scheme) evoked little response; and some who did attempt it "knew little or nothing about it but went on to say what they thought it ought to be."

(vi) *English Literature.* (Passes: 60%)

"From the general standard of the answers, it would appear that Group C is first choice for those students who have recently passed the Entrance and are facing the Registration exam. Generally speaking, inexperience shows through every line. . . . In short, there is too little real acquaintanceship with English literature, and a too rapid reading of elementary literary history is constantly apparent." Chronology was often weak; thus, in Q. 7 the order of the chief transition poets of the eighteenth century was often hopelessly mixed. (This largely destroys any chance of showing development during the period concerned.)

*Chief misconceptions:* (1). Misreading of questions, through failure to seize upon the operative words. Thus, Q. 1 calls for *salient* features; Q. 3 asks for the *development* of English prose. (2). Too elementary a knowledge of subjects, due to narrow reading. Thus, in Q. 8, "knowledge of De Quincey was invariably confined to the 'Confessions,' whilst Hazlitt was scurvily treated, few entrants being aware of the strength of his prose style and his status as a critic;". Q. 9 betrayed ignorance of George Eliot's novels other than "Mill on the Floss," and "Silas Marner," as well as little appreciation of her qualities.

N.B.—Q. 1 calls for "approximate dates"; an error of two centuries ceases to be "approximate." Q. 10 asks for one's choice of the "established British dramatists of the twentieth century." Even if not chosen, Shaw, Barrie and Galsworthy must be mentioned if one is to justify alternatives.

## Tutors' Problems

D. A. R. KEMP

AS one landed on a strange shore, wondering whether he is among friends I find it as embarrassing as always to hold the balance between tact and frankness. For the tutor's first problem is a general one. Two things are involved in his work: to get the student through the examination and to do what a tutor can to make him a better librarian. Is that the correct order? And before you tell me to face facts and so on let it be understood that of course getting through the examination matters. Yet the tutor who takes the commercial point of view and sets out to do what the crammer does so much more efficiently is not only asking for comparisons to his detriment but is failing to do what the Library Association (and the student in the long run) demands of him. Students should be taught to learn rather than taught what to say.

And this indeed makes the work of a tutor more intelligible, for there is little intelligence in the old style of "Study past papers." What can be guessed from a study of the past papers in Finals English? Simply that anything may turn up, from a purely critical question on translation of poetry to a paper on literature since 1800 without any reference whatever to drama. The considered opinion of a professional crammer on these papers was that either the examiners were fools (which point of view was ruled out)



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or that this was an examination which was right outside the crammer's "line of country."

Significant as this is, however, it does not help the tutor in more than a purely negative way, for it would still appear in all the examinations that any question can be set at any apparent level with the excuse that it all depends on the standard required, or that "what we want is evidence of the student's ability to see round the question." Quite frankly such excuses are not valid: they leave in their train an inevitable trail of failures on the part of men whom the tutor knows to be thoughtful and intelligent but have not been called upon to exercise those qualities because standards have not been defined. "After a few years the standard will become obvious" is not good enough. Nor is "Use you common sense" in finding what is needed in answer to "Give some indication of your familiarity with" a point. And when two papers contain the same question on proof correcting "common sense" tells the tutor that this should not happen—and the student things which he should not know about the system. Nor is it "common sense" to set questions for those who "have worked outside the syllabus" or to have more than one standard in the same paper.

Now this might in a student be considered mere carping, but it is a matter of vital importance to the tutor, who is only too often driven to the point of disregarding both examiners and past papers alike, depending only on teaching the backbone of the subject with as much of the rest of the skeleton as he can get in. Only backbones would appear to go by fashion: specifications are one at the moment; and in order to maintain self-respect in face of his students the tutor must simply do his best and keep his fingers crossed, together with using text-books which are admittedly not sufficient in number or scope to answer all the questions adequately. If that is not good enough for the student do you think that the tutor himself is satisfied?

Side by side with this problem of what to teach is the equally important one of how. Not as a school teacher alone, especially with the Finals Classes, although perhaps there ought to be much more of normal teaching in some spheres however little the student likes it. The cataloguing codes must be known and the attitude of "How can I be expected to learn all that?" cannot be tolerated in the student. He must be taught if necessary by the methods used in junior schools. But such questions as "If you can suggest any improvements on current practice, develop your ideas" cannot be taught by rule-of-thumb methods. So that the tutor *must* do more than recommend passages from text-books, and indeed we suggest that lectures should be based upon but not tied up with text-books so that only at the end of a lecture or series of lectures should students be given references to the books in which the matter dealt with is to be found in summary or explanatory form.

Then there is the difficulty of the student who does not really want to work but to have some magic formula given to him by the use of which he can produce answers without having learned the subject. And the cocky student who, having caught the textbook (or even the tutor) out on some small point, at once decides that he knows more about the subject than the tutor. The most practical attitude to both of these is a firmly voiced "Outside, you," for though the *ex cathedra* attitude is not the best one for the tutor, but rather a common sharing of a difficult task, there is no creature less teachable than the lazy or the cocky student, and if left alone he will very easily disturb the rest of the class. And of course if he fails the examination it will be the tutor's fault while if he passes it is by light of his own genius. Yet if he is the Scylla, the Charybdis is the student who sits in open-mouthed admiration and takes down in shorthand even the lecturer's jokes. If the lecturer knows his job he may get through but

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(to quote a Chief after a particularly bad lunch) it may be a case of X going away an unqualified fool and coming back a qualified one.

There is, too, a personal problem facing tutors. There are students who are ordinary decent types but are not too bright; others who are held back by some weakness—lack of confidence or inability to express themselves—and who should be taught on the intimate personal method; or there is the man who simply has a bad memory, the woman who works with one eye on the time when some certain man can afford to marry her. All the personal aspects of the students. Is it the tutor's place to say to anybody "You will never get through an examination," or "You are taking my time at the expense of somebody who would benefit more from it"? Is it better for the student so, or for the profession as a whole? And it is no easy decision, complicated as it is by the fact that the best examinee is not always the best practising librarian.

And finally there is the matter of keeping up with new text-books. Having read Mr. Savage and found him full of sound sense, is the tutor to pay attention to the ex-examiner who says with brutal frankness in the Members' Room at Chaucer House that no student should be allowed to read him, or even that his iconoclasm is nothing more than a nuisance? Yet there is no surer way of losing face with the students than letting them have an opinion on a controversial matter and not have an equally firmly held opinion himself; for there will always be one student who will call the bluff of sitting on the fence and set the whole pack on the trail. The tutor who plays for safety is as useless as the librarian who selects books that are well reviewed by all his sources and only those.

We were recently reminded in the *Record* that the L.A. marking system has now been vastly improved. It is now as good as any body of students can expect. But there remains the fundamental problem: on what are the examinees to be tested? And I assert with all the lung-power at my command that this is a matter in which tutors are deeply concerned. If it is not to be that they have any say in the matter, is it asking much that they should be informed concerning what should be taught? For long enough the farce of guessing has gone on. Nor (for the jibe is sure to come) do I mean that they should know what the questions are to be. Are tutors, as contrasted with examiners or the Education Committee, so untrustworthy that it could not be said openly to them that certain matters should be taught but are not suitable for examination questions, and the matter left to their professional conscience? The codes to be dealt with in the cataloguing and classification examinations have been defined: this does not mean that nothing else will be mentioned in lectures, nor should it. Nor is this a personal attack upon anybody. The matter is one of principle and has been raised over the examinations of another body than the Library Association. The comment made then that the objector's head was in some curious way too big for his boots may have spiked my guns personally but did not answer the objection. It is to be remembered that in the more intelligently conducted interviews for posts some such question is asked as "What reason have you to think that you are capable of doing this job?" I commend the question to all concerned with what is the tutor's job, the training of librarians. And there, sir, is the door wide open for you.

### Wanted

The Hon. Editor is in immediate need of copies of the A.A.L. pamphlet, *First steps in annotation in catalogues*, by W. C. Berwick Sayers, 2d. ed. revised, 1932. Members who have a copy which they can spare are asked to forward it as soon as possible. Those first received will be replaced with a copy of the reprint when it becomes available.

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### Correspondence

Central Library,  
Leyton, E.10.

The Editor, *The Library Assistant*,  
Sir,

I have recently received an offer from Dr. John Adams Lowe, Director Rochester Public Library, 115 South Avenue, Rochester 4, New York, U.S.A., to take a man and two women as "Interne Librarians" from England for a period of twelve months. I am hoping one member of my own Staff will be able to take advantage of the offer, and I should be glad if you would bring the opportunity to the notice of your readers, as there may be others who would like the chance of obtaining experience in this excellent service and really fine modern library.

Dr. Lowe's offer is in these terms: "We could pay \$2100 (£525) for the twelve months. Our working conditions are excellent. The city is outstanding, and although highly important as an industrial centre . . . it is wealthy, conservative, civic minded, with high cultural and intellectual standards. University of Rochester, Eastman School of Music, Rochester Institute of Technology are among the leading educational institutions. It is a city of parks and homes. Photography and music are predominating community interests for its 325,000 inhabitants. Our schedules are made on a five-day week basis with no Sunday service. This allows long week-ends for occasional trips to New York or Washington, Toronto, Niagara Falls and other points of interest. We have had four staff members for this year, Library School graduates, one from Paraguay and three from Canada."

If any colleague is interested in this opportunity will he or she please apply direct to Dr. Lowe for further details.

Yours sincerely,  
E. SYDNEY,  
Borough Librarian.

### Students' Facilities

THE annual Summer School of Librarianship at Birmingham has already been announced by circular, but a reminder of its excellence may be welcome. The school is residential, and lasts for two weeks, 15th—28th August. Enquiries should be addressed to Mr. W. Pearson, A.L.A., Honorary Secretary, Library Association Summer School, Reference Library, Birmingham 1.

For London students classes have been arranged in West Ham Municipal College and at the Spring Grove Polytechnic. At West Ham the classes for the Entrance Examination are to be on Wednesdays, from 1.30 to 4.30 p.m., for Registration on Wednesdays from 1.30 to 6 p.m. and Thursdays from 2.30 to 4.30 p.m. Classes begin on 22nd September, and students may enrol then or on 23rd September. Final or specialist courses will be arranged if sufficient students require them. The fee for either full course is 21s. for the session.

At Spring Grove classes covering the Entrance and Registration Examinations and three parts of the Final will begin on September 15th, and continue on Wednesdays until the May-June examinations, 1949. Course fees vary between 10s. and 30s. according to the grade and number of subjects taken. Enquiries should be addressed to Mr. Harold Groom, F.L.A., Central Library, Hounslow, (HOU. 2381), or to the Polytechnic, (HOU. 1488).

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### A.A.L. Correspondence Courses

Students taking correspondence courses who sat for the December examinations achieved a pass figure of 69% as compared with the general pass figure of 52.92% for all students who sat for the examinations.

It is pleasing for the A.A.L. Education Committee to be able to publish these results which confirm earlier observations made on the June, 1947 examinations when a pass figure of 70% was obtained by correspondence course students. Against this, however, it must again be recorded that of students enrolling for the course only a little over a third completed the course and sat for the examination. This is unfortunate since it involves a great expenditure of time and energy on the part of the honorary officers and tutors who generously give their spare time to help students, only to find their excellent endeavours repaid in this fashion.

It would appear that students need to reflect a little more before they commit themselves to a course, and having finally resolved to undertake it they should apply themselves with all the diligence possible since it is obvious that a student who does finally complete the course stands a very good chance of passing a particular examination.

Excellent work is being done to help students by all Divisions in sponsoring One-day Courses, Reference Library Schools, and Oral Classes, and indeed the response of students to these classes has been very gratifying—the Greater London Division alone received over 300 applications from students for the Sunday One-day School held at Chaucer House on 30th May, 1948. The School was so successful that the Division plan the holding of a similar course before every examination.

Comparable figures for the library schools are not easily obtained since students at these schools sit for Registration and Final examinations only. The 44 Library School students sitting for the examinations, taking 124 groups, were successful in 84 groups, giving a pass rate of 67.7%.

Detailed figures of the correspondence course results are as follows:—

	<i>No. of Students</i>	<i>Completed course and sat for exam.</i>	<i>Passes</i>	<i>Failed or Referred</i>	<i>% of Passes</i>
Entrance	214	99	82	17	81%
Registration	314	112	59	53	52%
Final	125	39	28	11	71%
			(1 Hons.)		
Intermediate	18	15	13	2	86%
	<hr/> 671	<hr/> 265	<hr/> 182	<hr/> 83	<hr/> 69%

Correspondence Courses in the sections mentioned below will be arranged to run from April to June of the following year, and from November to December of the following year. The Courses, conducted under the auspices of the A.A.L. (Section of the L.A.), comprise ten monthly lessons, consisting of a prescribed selection of technical reading, hints and advice on study and practical work and questions or subjects for essays upon which the tutor will write comments or corrections.

The subjects treated and the respective fees are as follows:—

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**Entrance Examination.**—The Course covers the whole of the L.A. requirements for this examination. Fee, £2 10s. 0d.

**Registration Examination.**—Group (a) (i) Classification—Fee, £1 15s. 0d.; (ii) Cataloguing—Fee, £1 15s. 0d. Group (b) (iii) and (iv) Bibliography and Assistance to Readers in the choice of books—Fee, £2 10s. 0d. Group (c) (v) Library Organization and Administration—Fee, £1 15s. 0d.; (vi) History of English Literature—Fee, £1 15s. 0d.

**Final Examination.**—Part 1, Bibliography and Book Selection—Fee, £2 0s. 0d. Part 2, Library Organization and General Librarianship—Fee, £2 0s. 0d. Part 3, Library Routine and Administration: (a) Public Libraries—Fee, £2 0s. 0d.; (b) University and College Libraries—Fee, £2 0s. 0d.; (c) Special Libraries and Information Bureaux—Fee, £2 0s. 0d. Part 4, Literary Criticism and Appreciation: (a) Modern Literature—Fee, £2 0s. 0d. Part 5, Specialist Certificates: (c) Advanced Classification—Fee, £1 15s. 0d.; Advanced Cataloguing—Fee, £1 15s. 0d.; (d) Historical Bibliography—Fee, £2 0s. 0d.

Non-members of the Library Association are charged double fees.

Students wishing to enter for a Course must obtain an application form from and send it (together with the appropriate fee) to the Joint Hon. Education Secretaries, Carnegie Library, Herne Hill Road, London, S.E.24. Applications must reach the above before 20th March and 20th October for the April and November courses respectively.

**Important.**—Before entering for a Course, students are particularly advised to make themselves familiar with the regulations governing the examination, as printed in *The Library Association year book*. Any queries concerning the examinations or the syllabus should be sent direct to The Library Association and not to The Association of Assistant Librarians.

## On the Editor's Table

Predeek, Albert. *A History of Libraries in Great Britain and North America*; tr. by Lawrence S. Thompson. 1947. (Chicago, A.L.A. \$3.25.)

This is a concentrated history of libraries on both sides of the Atlantic written by a Prussian scholar-librarian. The impression of stodge conveyed by this description is belied by the text. Dr. Predeek, who was director of the library of the Technische Hochschule in Berlin-Charlottenburg, has given us an interesting, provocative and well-documented narrative, if rather a sketchy one.

Originally published in 1940, it takes its story to 1939. Obviously it is difficult to deal adequately with four hundred years of British libraries in eighty pages, and even harder to include more than the bare bones of the American library story in forty-eight. This compression gives rise to much generalization: it could hardly be otherwise. But a categorical statement that "there is no general description and history of British librarianship" does less than justice to Minto. And is it true to say, as Dr. Predeek does (p. 69), "... the classified catalogue as such has been able to make no progress. The British main catalogue has remained an alphabetical one, either as an author catalogue or as a subject catalogue, and, to a small extent, as a dictionary catalogue"? And, on professional politics: "... within the Library Association the public libraries have influenced collective policies out of proportion to their own significance." (p. 76). Well!

On British professional education he is so concise as to be misleading, while his

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summing up of the chapter on administrative and professional problems will raise the hackles of many British readers: "a satisfactory solution of all professional questions may be reached only when the government approaches more firmly than before its task of establishing central regulation, supervision, and financing of libraries throughout the entire country." (p. 78).

In general, Dr. Predeck seems to move with a surer touch in the field of American libraries than in our own, which may perhaps be accounted for by wider personal experience and greater personal predilection. Not that he is uncritical of American methods: his comment (p. 126) on the bias towards technique and away from scholarship points a timely moral for readers of and contributors to *The Library Assistant*.

American book production tends so frequently towards the arid, the angular, and the unbeautiful (for some reason this is particularly noticeable in library literature!) that it is a real pleasure to handle so elegant a volume as this.

One would recommend this book as a stimulating approach to its subject, to be read critically by students, and argued over at length.

L. A. H.

Stott, C. A. *School Libraries: a short manual*, 1947. (Cambridge University Press 7s. 6d.)

There is probably no one in this country who knows more of what has been done in school libraries than Mr. Stott and this book is to be welcomed as the product of serious thought based on a long and wide experience.

The book is a practical manual for the use of school librarians, but is of interest and value also to the professional librarian. It falls broadly into two parts, on the administration and technique of the school library and on the place of the library in the whole educational process of the school.

There is a short chapter on the school library and the public library from the point of view of the teacher which contains one or two minor inaccuracies—county library headquarters are, for example, normally open to the public for loan and reference—and which contains the only seriously controversial matter in the book.

The use of books and libraries is taught in few schools at present, and many candidates for the Entrance Examination could therefore derive assistance for their own study of books, their use and content, from the methods of teaching which Mr. Stott suggests. To candidates for Registration C (V) and Finals Part II and III it is the best general guide to its subject, while to all who are responsible for young people's libraries it can be recommended as a book written from the teacher's viewpoint, but by one who has a considerable knowledge and appreciation of public library work.

The major criticism to be made of this book is that it assumes an interest in and awareness of the value and use of libraries which is shown by very few teachers at present. Until sufficient teachers and head teachers show this interest the book's value must be idealistic rather than practical, while expenditure on the scale suggested might well result in fine book stocks without teacher-librarians to exploit them.

The author writes primarily, throughout, from the point of view of the public and grammar schools and while most of what he says could be applied with modification to secondary modern schools, the book would have gained in value by a more detailed consideration of their needs, at present the more urgent owing to the almost complete absence of libraries in such schools.

There is a bibliography of six pages.

F. A. S.

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*Matters relating to Correspondence Courses and A.A.L. publications to the Joint Hon. Education Secretaries. Orders for THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT, advertisement space, enquiries as to advertisement rates, etc., to the Hon. Treasurer. Enquiries relating to membership to the Hon. Membership Secretary. MSS. and letters for publication, preferably typed and double-spaced, to the Hon. Editor. Divisional reports and news to the Hon. Assistant Editor. No payment is made for articles published in THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT. All other enquiries to the Hon. Secretary.*

N.B.—In future, THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT will be distributed by Divisional Hon. Secretaries, to whom all enquiries should be sent.

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## A.A.L. PUBLICATIONS

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LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL

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## **UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN**

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Further particulars and information as to the method of application may be obtained from the Secretary, Universities Bureau of the British Empire, 8, Park Street, London, W.1. The closing date for the receipt of applications is **1st September, 1948.**